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Lighting up Boston's  
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page 10

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Fourth  
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[aarp.org/fraudwatchnetwork](http://aarp.org/fraudwatchnetwork)



**Fraud Watch  
Network**

## AARP announces free shred events in communities through August

By MIKE FESTA, STATE DIRECTOR  
AARP MASSACHUSETTS

The AARP Fraud Watch Network arms Massachusetts residents, and all Americans, with the tools they need to spot and avoid scams. A free resource for people of all ages, the Fraud Watch Network offers real-time alerts about the latest scams in your state, a scam tracking map where people can report



Mike Festa

on scams so their friends and neighbors know what to watch out for, a guide to outsmarting con artists, and a

helpline where Massachusetts residents can talk to a trained volunteer for advice if they or someone they love has been scammed.

One of the best ways to safeguard against identity theft and fraud is to shred personal documents.

AARP Massachusetts is doing our part to help you avoid identity theft and fraud by offering free Fraud Watch Network shredding events around the state in July and August. Shredding confidential documents is a good way to protect against scammers.

Not sure what to keep or shred? Certain bank, financial, household and medical documents should be filed or a minimum number of years before shredding.

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In addition to shredding, many simple precautions can help keep your information safe, including:

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Be aware of others who are nearby when you're using PIN numbers, and never discard an ATM receipt in a public waste-

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Don't give credit card or bank account numbers over the phone, through the mail or over the Internet without confirming you are dealing with an actual representative of a legitimate business.

Secure personal information at home, especially when having work done by strangers.

Be extra careful about revealing information online at social networking sites, chat rooms, genealogy or class reunion sites.

Our shredding events are free and open to the public. Bring any confidential documents to our shredding events, and we'll shred them for free in the on-site shredding truck. It only takes a few minutes. Limit five boxes per person, please. Please call 1-866-448-3621 with questions. See you at the shred events!

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Worcester Technical  
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Worcester, MA 01605

### **Winchester:**

Saturday, August 4, 2018,  
11 a.m. - 2 p.m.  
Jenks Center  
109 Skillings Rd.,  
Winchester, MA 02601

### **Brockton:**

Wednesday, August 29, 2018,  
12-3 p.m.  
Brockton Council on Aging  
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Brockton, MA 02301

For more information, check out [www.aarp.org/ma](http://www.aarp.org/ma). Sign up for The Fraud Watch Network for free at <http://www.aarp.org/fraudwatchnetwork> or call 877-908-3360.

**Mike Festa is the state director for AARP Massachusetts. Archives of articles from previous issues can be read at [www.fiftyplusadvocate.com](http://www.fiftyplusadvocate.com).**



# 'King of Pop Culture' values toys and collectibles

By ED KARVOSKI JR.  
CULTURE EDITOR

HUDSON — Gary Sohmers has worked as an appraiser since 1971 and increased his endeavors soon after moving to Hudson in 1983. He opened a popular store downtown known as Wex Rex Collectibles, began producing collectibles events, and became a talk-show guest heard regularly on WBZ NewsRadio 1030. Additionally, he shared his pop-culture expertise for 13 seasons on PBS-TV's "Antiques Roadshow."

"Kids growing up in Hudson from 1984 to '91 constantly came to my store," he said. "They listened to music, bought cassettes, and saw nostalgic toys and whatever was currently happening in pop culture."

From 1986 to 2001, Sohmers produced the Northeast Collectibles Extravaganza in Boston, Marlborough, Methuen, Wilm-



(l to r) Singer and toy dealer Chris Farlowe, heavy metal musician Alice Cooper, and Gary Sohmers

ington and Woburn, and then from 2014 to 2016 in Wilmington. In 1986, television's "Batman" star Adam West made his first of several appearances at the extravaganzas. Also in 1986, WBZ NewsRadio talk-show

host David Brudnoy conducted the first of many interviews with Sohmers.

"David challenged me to tell callers what their stuff was worth without seeing it," Sohmers explained. "He named it 'psychic

appraisals' and called me 'The King of Pop Culture.' After David passed away, Morgan White followed up and I'm continuing to do psychic appraisals now with Dean Johnson."

Fellow appraisers recommended Sohmers for "Antiques Roadshow" to assess pop-culture collectibles and toys. He reported to his first "Roadshow" appraisal wearing a Hawaiian shirt.

"Everyone else was wearing a suit, so I asked the producer if she wanted me to put on a sport coat," he recounted. "She said, 'No, you ain't gonna make it on TV anyway. Nobody ever gets it right the first time.'"

His appraisal that day of a painting by musician Frank Zappa did air and was captured by a USA Today photographer. After coverage was published, he was allowed to continue wearing Hawaiian shirts on the program

Sohmers page 4



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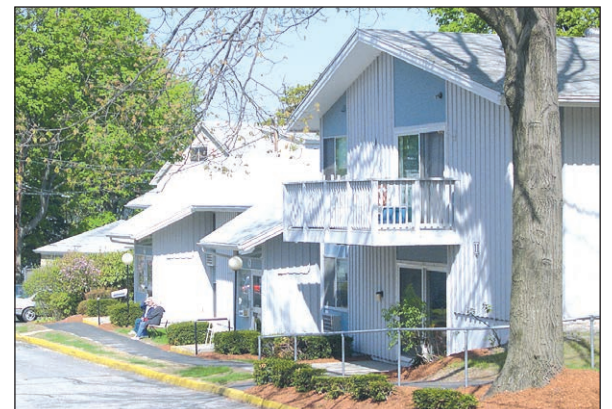
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# 'King of Pop Culture' values toys and collectibles

Sohmers

Continued from page 3

from 1997 to 2011.

Sohmers appraised Zappa's painting at \$15,000 to \$25,000. His most valuable "Roadshow" appraisal was a collection of Charles Schulz original "Peanuts" drawings worth \$450,000. These are among his appraisals that can be viewed online at pbs.org/antiques.

When a former JCPenney was transformed into the Hanover Mall Event Center, Sohmers re-named and relocated his show to the SouthCoast Comic-Con & Collectibles Extravaganza. Its first venture was in March 2017 featuring Adam West along with the "Dynamic Duo" co-star Burt Ward as Robin. It was West's final public appearance; he passed away June 9, 2017, after briefly battling with leukemia.

"Adam was the greatest," Sohmers said. "He was my hero."

“Adam [West] was the greatest. He was my hero.”  
Gary Sohmers



Gary Sohmers and WBZ NewsRadio's Dean Johnson



TV's "Batman" star Adam West and Gary Sohmers



Gary Sohmers

Sohmers is currently working toward opening his own venue, a pop-culture museum and event center. He's been in discussion with several Massachusetts locations. He also provides appraisals for customers ranging from households downsizing to overstocked warehouses.

"Everybody wins when someone with wise eyes looks at ev-

erything before the trash-men cometh," he said. "You can make a lot of money with comic books, records, toys, early videogames and old computers."

For more information about his appraisals and future events, visit allcollectors.com, necomiccon.net and on Facebook at facebook.com/BostonSouthCoastComicCon.

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# july

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# 'Everyone here is my friend'

BY JANE KELLER GORDON  
ASSISTANT EDITOR

WORCESTER - There's nothing retiring about Rosalie Olds.

At age 90, she's an active ceramic sculptor and art teacher, and two years ago, she became a published author.

Love and admiration filled the Great Room at The Willows at Worcester this past April 1, when about 200 people, including her three children and three of four grandchildren, gathered to celebrate Olds' milestone birthday.

Olds was one of the first residents at The Willows. She moved there in 2009 with her beloved husband Stan and their adored dog, Sarah, who is now 15. Unfortunately, her husband died the next year.

Clearly, she loves living at the Willows.

"The food is wonderful, the ambience is great. I can be with



PHOTOS/JANE KELLER GORDON

people or have privacy when I want it. I have a studio here with my kiln where I teach and work. Everyone here is my friend," she said.

Her spacious apartment is filled with the warm colors and textures of her whimsical ceramic sculptures — some made on a potter's wheel and others hand built. There's a piece that's a horse that is actually a teapot,

and a three-headed swan that's a garden seat.

It's not a surprise that many of Olds' pieces have an animal theme; she wanted to be a veterinarian. Raised in the Bronx, she went to the University of Iowa, hoping to achieve that goal.

"If you wanted to go to veterinary school back then, there were very few options. I was accepted into the program, but I

**Rosalie  
Olds and  
"Sarah"**

lost my spot to a veteran. I ended up majoring in zoology and ignored in art," she said.

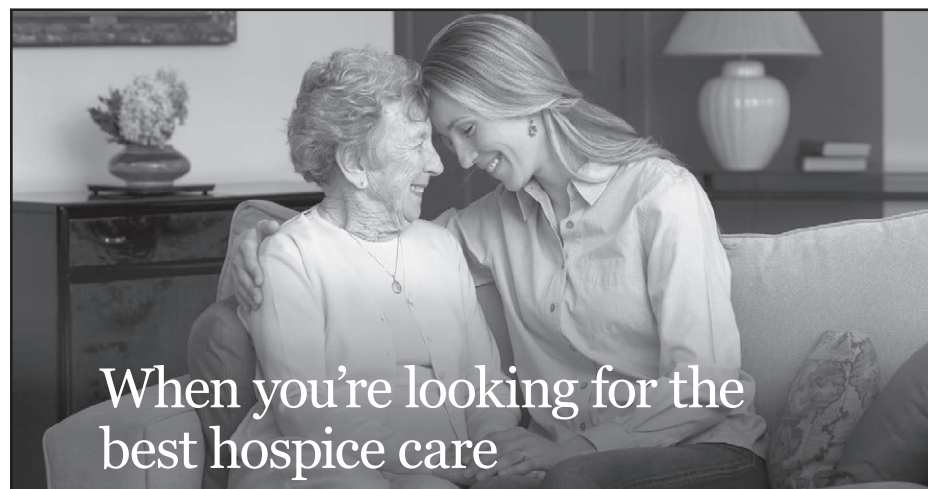
In addition to her studies, Olds met her husband of 58 years in Iowa, where he was a master's student in actuarial science. They married and eventually moved to Worcester in 1957 when Stan was hired by what is now Hanover Insurance.

Olds said that sculpture entered her life when she decided to craft centerpieces for her son's bar mitzvah.

What really made a difference for her was walking through the doors of the Worcester Center for Crafts. She honed her skills through lessons, and transitioned into a 40-year career in teaching there and at the Worcester Jewish Community Center (Worcester JCC).

She set up a large studio in her home, and passed on her artistic ability to her children:

Olds page 7



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# 'Everyone here is my friend'



Rosalie Olds and "Souprano"

Olds  
Continued from page 6

Claudia Olds Goldie is an award-winning sculptor, Leslie Blank is a graphic designer, and Guy Olds, who is now in real estate, was a cinematographer.

Now, Olds teaches sculpture and jewelry making at The Wil-lows, and ceramics at the WJCC. (Contact Nancy Greenberg at [ngreenberg@worcesterjcc.org](mailto:ngreenberg@worcesterjcc.org) for Worcester JCC class information.)

"I love to teach and see people develop their talent, which is usually hidden. Here at the Wil-lows, most of my students are in their 70s, 80s, and into their 90s. They haven't played in the mud since they were kids. It's exciting to teach them," she said.

As for becoming an author, about 15 years ago, Olds joined a writing group of 10 under the



Tree of Life

mentorship of Laura Porter, a longtime writer for the Worcester Telegram and Gazette.

"When you get to my age, you have a bucket list," Olds said. "And publishing a book was on mine."

Her first book, "Dead Weight" is available for purchase through Amazon. She said that she has completed her second, and is working on her third.

There's nothing retiring about Rosalie Olds.



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# Comedian also teaches and helps charitable causes

By ED KARVOSKI JR.  
CULTURE EDITOR

GARDNER/LYNN — Like many comedians, Jerry Caruso of Gardner maintains a busy performance schedule. Unlike most others, however, his calendar is also chock-filled with teaching stand-up comedy, organizing fundraisers' entertainment, fulfilling speaking engagements and hosting a cable-television show.

While growing up in Lynn, Caruso at age 12 began entertaining his classmates in the schoolyard at the now-closed St. Patrick's School. He continued honing his comedic craft at St. Mary's High School by impersonating celebrities as the feature act for his class of 1973's senior banquet.

"I'd make students laugh in classes, so I was slightly disruptive," he acknowledged. "When I performed at a pep rally



PHOTO SUBMITTED

**Jerry Caruso performs stand-up comedy.**

my senior year, the following school day other students gathered around me. Sister Monica banged her pointer to get my attention, saying, 'Oh, star! Can I teach my class now, star?' The nuns accepted me for who I am — to a point."

His sense of humor was also appreciated while working at the now-defunct Digital Equip-

ment Corporation in Hudson. In 1993, he roasted an employee who was leaving the company at her going-away party. The good-natured roast was well-received by co-workers.

"They told me that I should try performing at Nick's Comedy Stop in Boston and they'd go see me there," Caruso relayed. "I did — and have never looked back."

Now, his onstage banter includes recollections of growing up in an Italian family. His father was from Boston's North End and his mother from Italy. Caruso asked his mom why she's reluctant to see him perform.

Mimicking her accent, he recounted, "They all-ah gonna laugh at you! My sister forced her to see me at a Chinese restaurant in Peabody. She was like a heckler during my set, saying, 'That-sah not true! He-sah telling a joke!'"

Although Caruso's father

passed away of cancer in 1983, his presence is felt during the comedian's shows.

"My dad thought I was funny and should do comedy onstage," Caruso shared. "I always get inspired when I'm onstage knowing that he's watching me from a great seat in heaven."

A year after pursuing a comedy career, Caruso and friend Toney Markus co-founded Comics for a Cure. Caruso organizes fundraisers' lineups and performs with them.

"I do a good amount of the legwork to make it easy for the nonprofit organization, family or cause," he explained. "They only have to find a place to hold the event, publicize it and sell tickets."

In 1999, Caruso began teaching a stand-up comedy course at Mount Wachusett Community College in Gardner, and has since added Quinsigamond

Comedian page 9

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# Comedian also teaches and helps charitable causes

## Comedian

Continued from page 8

Community College in Worcester. His comedic curriculum covers joke writing, developing stage presence and booking gigs. Students have ranged from eighth grade to age 83.

"I had 83- and 75-year-old guys who were so natural and cool," Caruso recalled. "They

reminded me of the old-time comics who would do anything to make people laugh."

Upon graduation, his students appear on Athol-Orange Community Television's "The Jerry Caruso Comedy Hour." His show also features noteworthy community residents and a roundtable with veteran comedians.

As a motivational speaker since 2002, he has discussed the healthful benefits of humor at venues including Relay for Life events for the American Cancer Society, the Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts, and support groups at Heywood Hospital in Gardner.

Additionally, Caruso volunteers regularly to perform at As-

traZeneca Hope Lodge Center in Boston, a "home away from home" for cancer patients traveling over 40 miles to treatments.

"I thank God that I have the ability to make people laugh," he said. "I enjoy helping others as much as humanly possible."

For more information about Jerry Caruso, visit [jerrygcaruso-comic.webs.com](http://jerrygcaruso-comic.webs.com).



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# Fireworks by Grucci: Lighting up Boston's skies since 1976

By BONNIE ADAMS  
MANAGING EDITOR

When nearly a half a million people gather in Boston for the July 4 festivities each year, they know that they will be treated to a fabulous concert at the Hatch Shell, thanks to the Boston Pops, led by conductor Keith Lockhart. They also know they will see a thrilling display of fireworks, approximately 22 minutes long, in the skies over the Charles River. Overseeing that amazing display is a crew from Fireworks by Grucci, a family-owned company based in New York. Each year the company, led by CEO/Creative Director, Phil Grucci, puts in countless hours to ensure that Boston's Independence Day celebration is one worthy of a city where the fight for liberty all began.

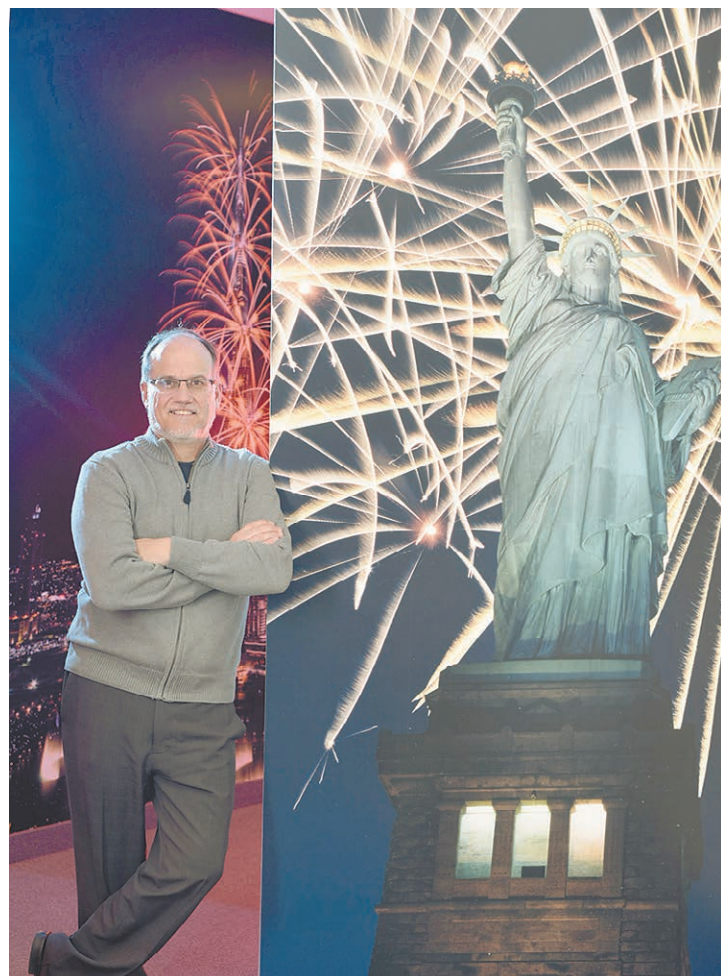
Now in its fifth-generation of family-ownership, Grucci, known as "America's First Fam-

ily of Fireworks," has performed at eight U.S. Presidential Inaugurations, four Olympic games, commemorations such as the Centennial of the Statue of Liberty, and numerous other events. It has also performed internationally including the grand opening of the Atlantis Dubai and the Palm Jumeirah Island in the United Arab Emirates.

They even hold a Guinness Book of World Record's title for a New Year's Eve 2013 performance where 479,651 fireworks were set off in Dubai and most recently, a Guinness World Record for the Largest Aerial Firework Shell weighing 2,397 lbs set January 1, 2018 in Al Marjan Island, Ras Al Khaimah, UAE

Family has always been an important part of Grucci's success, Phil Grucci said.

"Both my kids work with me as well as my nieces and nephews which are the sixth generation of our family," he said. "It's a great re-



Phil Grucci,  
CEO/  
Creative  
Director

PHOTO/SUBMITTED

sponsibility but also great honor."

His daughter, Lauren, 28, serves as barge captain for the Boston show.

"Our team is awesome. We need the best people to run the logistics of moving explosives from one place to another, safely and securely," he added.

Phil designs the majority of the 60-80 programs the company performs each year and reviews each one before it goes live.

Although the Fourth of July is an important time for them, New Year's Eve is actually busier, Phil said, because people around the

world celebrate that holiday.

But Boston definitely is very special to him, Phil said, adding that he always oversees the performance there each year.

The Grucci-Boston connection began back in 1976 when the company was contacted by Arthur Fielder, the iconic conductor of the Boston Pops Orchestra and David Mugar, the businessman and philanthropist who oversaw the city's celebration.

Phil, who was then a teen, said he could recall that time "like it was yesterday".


Fireworks page 11

adventurous

energetic

positive





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# Fireworks by Grucci: Lighting up Boston's skies since 1976

## Fireworks

Continued from page 10

"It was so exciting and such an honor," he said, especially as 1976 was the country's bicentennial celebration.

Prior to an actual performance, there is a lot of travel, meeting with organizers, and setting up logistics. Phil noted that he will actually come to Boston, for example, two or three times prior to the Fourth to meet with Lockhart to go over the score and design the visuals.

While the staging may be the same, the show is different each year.

"I strive to keep the energy levels up and create something new and fresh," he said. "Inspiration can come from anywhere – I'm always aware of the elements around me and drawing inspiration.

For every minute of the 22 minutes of the show, Phil puts in about 2- 2.5 hours to make sure



A fireworks display for Dolce & Gabbana

PHOTO SUBMITTED

everything is perfect and will go off without a hitch.

"There is really no time for jitters – you can't rehearse a show," he said. "You just have to everything absolutely set in place and ready to go. There are no do-overs either.

"There is so much emotion. It's really ecstatic and beautiful. So

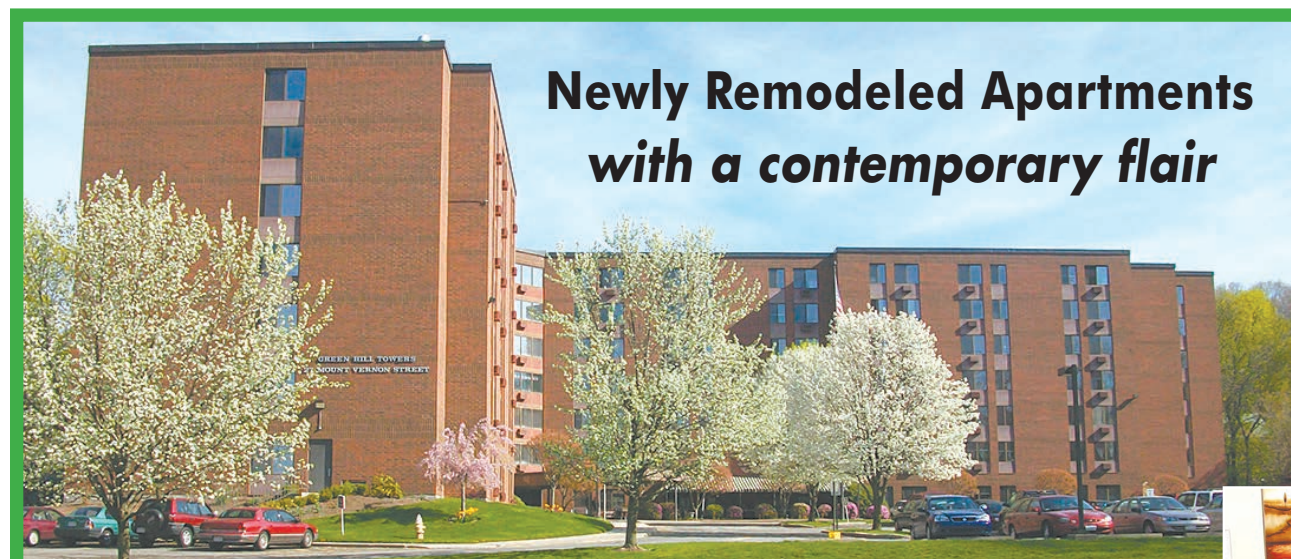
much work put into 22 minutes and then it's over.

"The Boston audience is very sophisticated but always appreciative. They know what to expect. The cheers of the audience enjoying the show are our best reward."

Some shows might have an added element of tribute to them such as in 2014 after the Boston

marathon attacks. But for the most part, Phil noted, the show is a glorious tribute to America and to those who have served and especially to those who have lost their lives doing so.

"Be united, go forward and be thankful, we are free," he said. "That's our message we always want to convey."

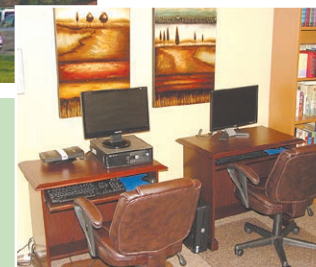


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## travel and entertainment

# Mynamar — centuries of history, culture and beauty

By VICTOR BLOCK  
TRAVEL WRITER

**M**y first surprise was that a Buddhist monk in Myanmar (Me-un-mahr) speaks enough English to have a conversation. Imagine how astonished I was when he pulled a smartphone from his robe and showed me photographs of his recent trip to Japan.

Last month's story described some of the fascinating attractions that greet visitors to Myanmar. Among the most memorable are the people of that country.

Itineraries planned by Myths and Mountains, the company with which I was traveling, provide plenty of opportunities for personal encounters, like the one my wife and I enjoyed with the monk. A high point of the trip, among many, occurred when he invited us to have lunch at the monastery that he heads.

Another was crossing paths with some of the 135 nationalities that comprise the country's population. Members of each group cling proudly to their distinctive dialect, way of dress and traditions.

Some are among the people who toil in small workshops, turning out products that are as beautiful as they are useful. They put in long hours often for wages

in the \$3-to-\$5 a day range.

I visited a shoemaker and silver smith, workshops for textiles and teak furniture, and shops where people cast bronze and carve wood. Even among such a varied sampling of mini-factories, each with its unique stories to relate, some linger in my memory. I was told that the shoemaker is the only one in the country who turns out special footwear for people with a disability.

A scene very different from the workshops awaits visitors to the ubiquitous outdoor markets that fill sidewalks and streets in cities, towns and villages. These are good places to meet and mingle with colorfully attired members of minority groups, some of whom are there to sell and others to buy.

Sidewalks are blanketed by vendors' stalls, and streets are clogged with locals doing their shopping. Items are displayed on rickety stands and tiny tables and in some cases spread out on the pavement. Clothing may be next to flowers and near parts of animals, some of which were unidentifiable to me. Goods ranging from cooking oil to curry powder, fish to fowl, beads to baskets are displayed, inspected by passers-by and, occasionally, purchased.

To briefly summarize the challenges that working people in



A family travels on a motor scooter.

PHOTOS/VICTOR BLOCK

Myanmar face, many of the daily tasks are very labor intensive. I watched a man spend a full day cutting a lawn at a resort with a hedge trimmer, a task which could have been completed in an hour or so with a power mower. Young men wield heavy hammers for hours on end to pound slabs of gold into paper-thin leaf. Women toiling at road repair projects somehow manage to carry large heavy rocks on their head.

Contrasting with lifestyles that in many ways have varied little

over time, vestiges of change also are evident throughout Myanmar. In cities, tiny dilapidated shacks stand near swishy shops that sell Armani, Rolex and other upscale merchandise. Streets are clogged by motor scooters, some carrying two adults and up to three small children, and trucks laden with unbelievably large loads.

To me some of the most interesting and intriguing sites were the villages that are scattered about the countryside, where

Travel page 13

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# Mynamar

**Travel**  
Continued from page 12

people in many ways live much as their forebears did. Simple houses made of intertwined bamboo line narrow dusty lanes. Dogs, chickens and other animals wander free, in a constant search for food.

In contrast to those scenes, even in the tiniest and most isolated hamlets, are that cell phones are as ubiquitous as in any major U.S. city. Children of all ages use a smartphone to play games, and opportunities for taking photographs tempt the traveler around every turn.

In addition to Myanmar, Myths and Mountains operates tours and custom trips to a number of destinations in Asia and Southeast Asia. For more information call 800-670-6984 or visit [mythsandmountains.com](http://mythsandmountains.com).

*Part 1 of this story was published in the June issue and can be found at [www.fiftyplusadvocate.com](http://www.fiftyplusadvocate.com).*



PHOTOS/SUBMITTED

**Left:**  
Vendors display their wares.

**Below:** A monk uses a cell phone.



“My first surprise was that a Buddhist monk in Myanmar speaks enough English to have a conversation. Imagine how astonished I was when he pulled a smartphone from his robe and showed me photographs of his recent trip to Japan.”



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# Shrewsbury woman uses art to fuel creativity

BY NANCE EBERT  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

SHREWSBURY- People look at retirement in different ways. For some, it means relocating to a warmer climate. For others, it might mean moving closer to children and grandchildren. Others reflect on their life's achievements and focus on interests and passions that they might not have had time to pursue while holding down a full time job.

Almost two years ago, at the age of 71, Suzanne Foxwell retired from the hospitality industry after working for the DoubleTree Hotel for many years. She enjoyed her time spent there and made many connections while being involved in corporate events. But she knew it was now her time to focus on herself as well as her family.

As an artist, Foxwell felt a strong desire to return to painting. On her website, she has a great va-



Left:  
Suzanne Foxwell

Below:  
"Colorful Turtle" by  
Suzanne Foxwell



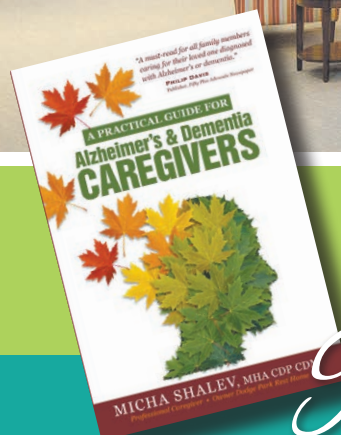
PHOTOS/SUBMITTED

riety of her beautiful paintings for sale, ranging from local attractions such as Wachusett Reservoir and Auburn Pond, to sea creatures and landscapes.

Using her background in hospitality, arts and interior design, along with her love of people, she also decided to open her own business, Suzanne's Art-Different Strokes. As such, she currently hosts painting events, team building, social events, wedding showers, birthdays and more.

Last May, Staples hired her to participate in their large corporate meeting, which was an event that spanned over several days in Portsmouth, N.H. Employees got to select activities incorporated into each day's schedule. Foxwell offered a painting class where each participant painted the Portsmouth Lighthouse, which was well attended.

As she loves working with people, Foxwell also teaches  
Foxwell page 15



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# Shrewsbury woman uses art to fuel creativity

**Foxwell**

Continued from page 14

classes at the Shrewsbury Senior Center.

Foxwell has also just self-published her memoirs in a book titled, "The Art of Living A Colorful Life: A Memoir." Originally from Springfield, she attended Becker College and lived for a time in Boston. In her book, she details one chilling episode where she and her roommate had a chance encounter with Albert DeSalvo, who later confessed to being the notorious "Boston Strangler." DeSalvo came to the apartment building where the young women lived at time, claiming to be a modeling agent. It was only when Foxwell and her roommate were living in San Francisco that they saw a Time magazine cover story on DeSalvo's arrest that they finally realized exactly who that "agent" was.

After her marriage to Ste-



*"Beautiful Sky Over Farm Country" by Suzanne Foxwell*

phen, the couple owned several farms and restaurants before Foxwell's career at the Double-Tree.

With such a varied past, Foxwell said upon reflection, she felt "how similar my approach to life and art have actually been."

"I thought sharing my story might be helpful to others because if there is one thing I learned over the years, it's that when you make a mistake, even if it's a big one, you can start over in both life and in art. It may not be easy but once you've made that first stroke on your blank canvas, each stroke after that will be easier," said Foxwell.

Now living in Shrewsbury, Foxwell is currently seeking a creative outlet for other artists. She feels there is a strong need for people to be able to go and rent space, set up their creations, exchange ideas, introduce new artistic approaches and have an art forum.

"Art is a never ending journey and it is the interpretation of what we see and how we see it that fuels our creativity. I'm hoping to find other artists who would be interested in forming a co-op," said Foxwell.

For more information go to [www.suzannefoxwell.com](http://www.suzannefoxwell.com)

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# 'The Quarry' is well worth a visit

BY JANE KELLER GORDON  
ASSISTANT EDITOR

ACTON - Driving north along Quarry Road in Acton, next to a tan house, there is a huge granite statue that seems out of place. To the right, a dirt road leads into a forest. What lies beyond — a

sculpture garden and art center called The Quarry — is well worth a visit.

Spread over 12.9 beautiful acres, The Quarry, also known as Contemporary Arts International, showcases more than 100 outdoor sculptures, including many by its founder Yin Peet, and her



"Container Man"



"Water Scooper"

partner Viktor Lois, an ingenious kinetic sculptor. Each piece is sited in harmony with nature.

Peet, a sculptor and performance artist, and Lois, a kinetic sculptor and sound engineer, are both internationally known artists. Both are also immigrants to the United States. Peet came from Taiwan in 1982 and Lois

from Hungary 2006.

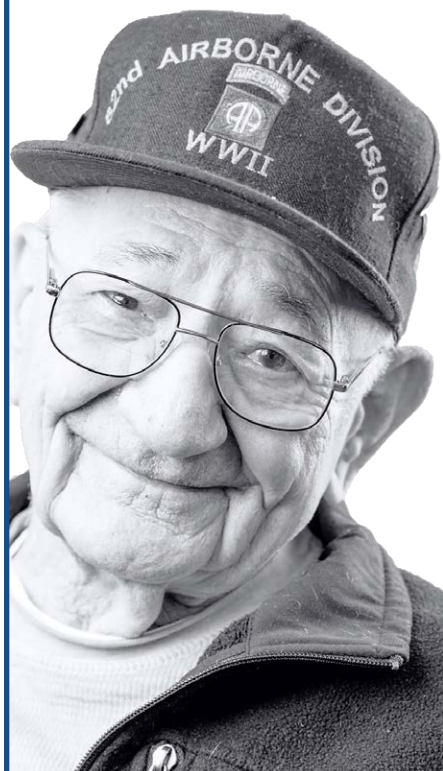
Their first collaboration, "Container Man," a mammoth sculpture built on a 40-foot shipping container platform, is the center point in The Quarry's 7,000 square-foot Red Box Building. Conceived by Peet and completed in 2002, after

Quarry page 17

PHOTOS/JANE KELLER GORDON

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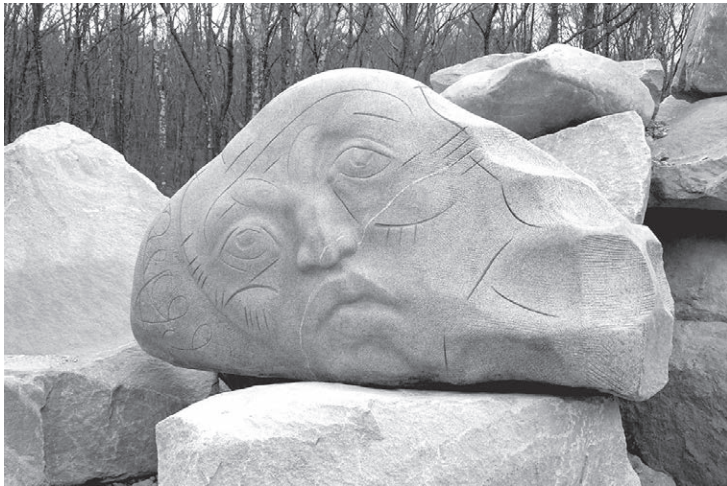
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# 'The Quarry' is well worth a visit



Rock sculpture

**Quarry**  
Continued from page 16

seven years of work by Lois, it includes 14 unique electronic instruments, made from washing machine drums, typewriters, industrial gates, and more.

"Viktor and I performed concerts on 'Container Man' touring through the Taiwan and Eastern Europe. It was an amazing experience," Peet said. "Since bringing the piece to The Quarry in 2008, we have continued to perform, and have been honored to host numerous others who have created music on this epic piece."

The Red Box Building also houses two galleries, studios, and classrooms.

Arched over the entrance to the building is the 36-foot tall bright yellow sculpture called "Sound Man," also made from shipping container platforms.

"Wind is my sculpture's composer and performer. It turns the sculpture's head, randomly activating five out of seven switches, which results in sound projected

through speakers," Lois said.

In the center of The Quarry, there is a stunning 1.5-acre pond. Twenty-seven cars were hauled out of this body of water in the mid-1970s. Now pristine, the pond is rimmed with sculptures, including Lois's most recent piece, aptly named the "Water Scooper."

When the Red Box Building was constructed, granite blocks from the old quarry - in many shapes and sizes - were uncovered. Yin and Lois created a long stacked pile of these rocks, which has become an important part of The Quarry.

Lois named the rock pile, "New Art Archaeology."

"We bring together stone sculptors from here and all over the world who each leave their creative traces, anticipating the future generations will enjoy this archaeological site," he said.

Since 2011, Peet and Lois have hosted an annual summer carving symposiums. Each year they invite four or five artists; there were eight artists in 2013.

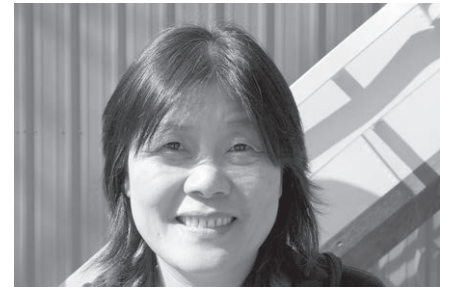


Viktor Lois

Some are local, and others have been from Hungary, England, Taiwan and Peru.

Figures, animals, birds, fish and symbols are spread over the granite pile, reflecting a variety of styles. With diamond blades and special granite tools, each artist painstakingly chisels their own personal style - rough and polished, big and small.

This coming season, Acton TV will be co-producing a weekly series on "Life of Sounds," Lois' kinetic musical sculptured instruments. During several episodes, the program will showcase the construction and sound of



Yin Peet

Lois' instruments.

From July 8 to Oct. 7, The Quarry will host an exhibition called "Before Ending of the Journey," featuring 30 large-scale paintings by Taiwanese artist Tai Ming-Te.

The Quarry is open to visitors Thursdays through Sundays, from 2-5 p.m. It is closed during the summer stone-carving symposium (Aug. 5- 26). A \$10 entrance fee helps support The Quarry, which is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. The Quarry is located at 68 Quarry Road in Acton. For more information, visit [contemporaryartsinternational.org](http://contemporaryartsinternational.org).

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## caregiving tips

By MICHA SHALEV  
MHA CDP CDCM

We get news every day of remarkable developments in the tech world that claim to make our lives better, easier or more or-



### Caregiving Tips

ganized. For families and friends caring at home for ill or frail adults, innovations in health technology promise dramatic changes in the ways health care is delivered.

In addition to these innovations, caregivers have some broader concerns: patient safety and security, organizing 24-hour care at home, managing complex medication protocols, meals, transportation and more. The good news is that many of these tasks can — with an investment in learning and sometimes in a new device — be made easier or more efficient. For caregivers who live far away or who are juggling jobs and care, incorporating certain new technologies into their lives can be particularly helpful and reassuring.

The question is, how do you

There are various medications which can help slow down the progression of the disease, and others that can improve the signs and symptoms.

choose the most appropriate app or website or hardware to make your already complicated life easier and not more complex — or worse, add to your frustration and the time demands of providing care to someone else?

**Fall prevention and response** — Every year, one in three adults age 65 and older will fall. Falls are the most common cause of death due to injury in this age group. Some health conditions increase the likelihood of a fall: problems with walking or moving around, medications, foot problems or unsafe footwear, drop in blood pressure when moving from sitting to standing, vision problems and tripping hazards at home. Help is available with fall detectors/sensors, sensor pads and wheelchair alarms. Many people benefit from emergency response systems such as Lifeline, Vital Link and Life Alert.

**Motion detectors** — These devices can be as simple as a light

turning on when someone enters a room. More complex devices can monitor for activity in a particular area or room of the house. You can arrange to be notified if there has been no activity for a given period of time.

**Webcams** — Another type of motion detector in which cameras are set up in different places in the house. You view the webcam to see what someone is doing, e.g., sleeping, watching TV, eating. With some of these devices, keep in mind that privacy issues may need to be addressed.

**Audio Monitors** — Two-way communication devices, such as baby monitors, allow you to listen to someone from another room, so you can hear if your parent has awakened from

sleep, for example, or is ready for a meal, or needs help getting out of bed.

**Wandering/exit-seeking** — Door alarms can keep someone from wandering outside. GPS devices can be programmed and personalized, enabling caregivers to link a smartphone to a mobile device installed in a shoe or belt, helping to locate someone if he or she wanders or becomes lost due to severe memory loss.

**Telephone/video check-ins** — Available in many communities, volunteers make daily calls to older adults who live alone to be sure they can answer the phone and are OK. Video chatting, using Skype or a similar service, helps you connect with someone if you can't be there in person.

**Communication aids:** Specialized equipment, such as phones with large buttons and enhanced audio, or computers with greatly enlarged type, can help someone with impaired vision or hearing.

Micha Shalev, MHA CDP CDCM CADDCT, is the co-owner of The Oasis at Dodge Park, Dodge Park Rest Home and The Adult Day Club at Dodge Park located at 101 and 102 Randolph Road in Worcester. He holds a master's degree in healthcare management, graduated from the National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners program, and is well-known speaker covering Alzheimer's and dementia training topics. He can be reached at 508-853-8180 or m.shalev@dodgepark.com. Archives of articles from previous issues can be read at [www.fiftyplusadvocate.com](http://www.fiftyplusadvocate.com).

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By ALAIN VALLES, CRMP,  
MBA, CSA  
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ment-insured loans that allow qualified homeowners the option to convert illiquid home equity into tax-free cash. Reverse mortgages have become a credible option to remain financially independent during retirement. Here are the top ten common questions:

**1: "How old must I be?"** At least one borrower must be at least 62 years of age. A spouse under 62 years of age is allowed and, subject to guidelines, would be allowed to remain and own the home if the older spouse predeceases.

**2: "How much money is available?"** It depends. It depends on the age(s) of the homeowner, property value, balance(s) of any existing mortgage(s), income, and credit history. You're invited to contact us for a detailed explanation and calculation of what is available.

**3: "Must I make a monthly payment?"** Unlike conventional mortgages that require a monthly payment, reverse mortgage give you the option to never make a monthly mortgage or interest payment thereby increasing your monthly cash flow. Note – you

are required to remain current on property taxes, homeowner's insurance, and any other property charges.

**4: "If I make no monthly payments, what happens to the reverse mortgage loan balance?"** The balance will grow over time. Each month the interest on the reverse mortgage will be added to the reverse mortgage balance.

**5: "How is a reverse mortgage paid back?"** The primary ways a reverse mortgage are paid off is to sell the home while the borrower is alive, or upon their passing, with any profit retained by the borrower or the estate. Or, heirs may choose to retain ownership of the home by paying off the reverse mortgage with other assets.

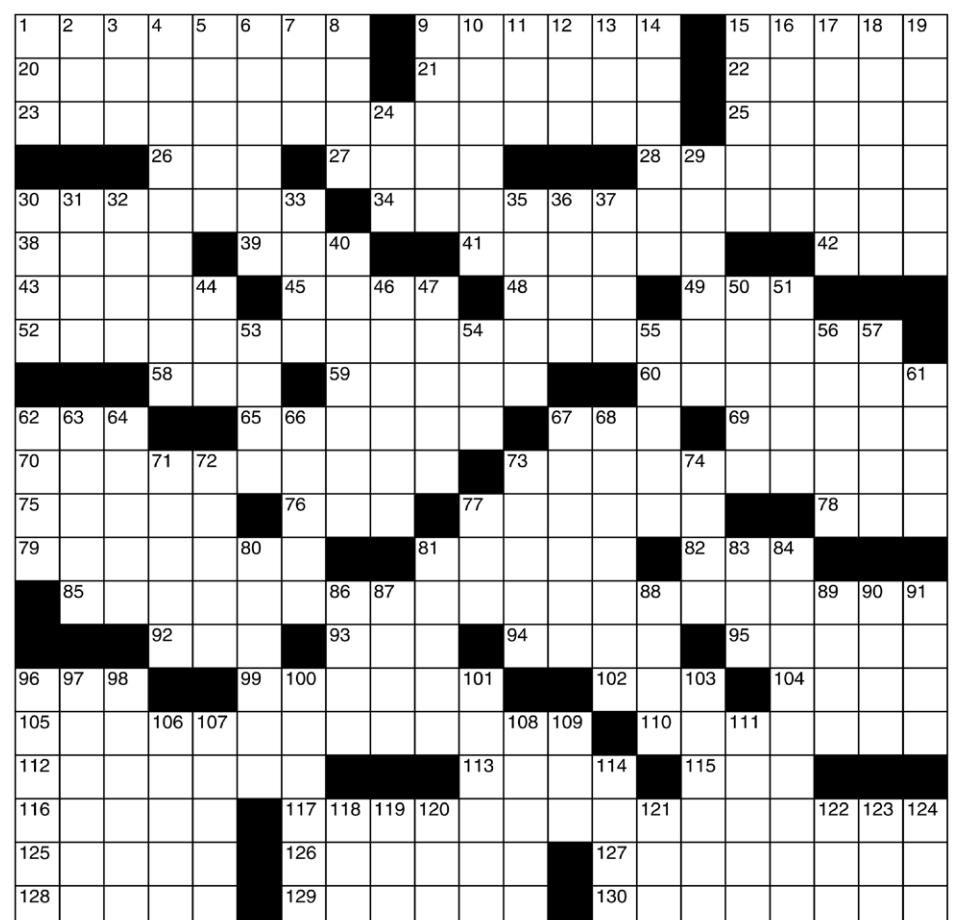
**6: "Are reverse mortgages expensive?"** It depends. Com-

Reverse mortgage page 20

# SUPER CROSSWORD PUZZLE

"Recreational Mathematics"  
(answers on page 20)

- ACROSS**
- 1 Sovereign
  - 9 "And on and on and on": Abbr.
  - 15 Like saltines
  - 20 Fit to send via the postal service
  - 21 Old-time comedian Russell
  - 22 Designer Oscar de la
  - 23 Olive Oyl's guy, to a math lover?
  - 25 Hall's partner in music
  - 26 Chicken —
  - 27 "Have — a deal for you!"
  - 28 Increases, as debt
  - 30 2011-15 speaker of the House
  - 34 Huge grin, to a math lover?
  - 38 Meditative discipline
  - 39 "Oh really? — who?!"
  - 41 Old Carl Sagan series
  - 42 Guitarist Nugent
  - 43 Layer with a "hole" in it
  - 45 Hand lender
  - 48 Narrow coastal inlet
  - 49 R.E. Lee's org.
  - 52 Male Oscar category, to a math lover?
  - 58 Cry audibly
  - 59 Sir — Newton
  - 60 One like the previous one
  - 62 Suffix with leopard
  - 65 Will subject
  - 67 Lump of mayo, e.g.
  - 69 Harsh in tone
  - 70 "Les Misérables" author, to a math lover?
  - 73 More done than "bloody," to a math lover?
  - 75 Pretty up
  - 76 Mimic
  - 77 Ballpark bite
  - 78 Casual greetings
  - 79 Cry upon arriving
  - 81 Air, as an oldie
  - 82 Wallach of "The Misfits"
  - 85 Spinning measure, to a math lover?
  - 92 — while
  - 93 Extra NBA periods
  - 94 Petrol station name
  - 95 "— Marner"
  - 96 Stick on
  - 99 Reporter, informally
  - 102 South, south of the border
  - 104 Tetra- + five
  - 105 Protective spirit, to a math lover?
  - 110 Motoring TV series
  - 112 No fewer than
  - 113 Burglarizes
  - 115 Jerry's uncle on "Seinfeld"
  - 116 Certain floor specialist
  - 117 1950 black-comedy film
  - 125 Lift with effort
  - 126 Motionless
  - 127 Talked nonsense
  - 128 Pack-toting animals
  - 129 Carmelite nun
  - 130 Vampire novelist
  - DOWN**
  - 1 Mini-demon
  - 2 — Zedong
  - 3 Domino spot
  - 4 Pachyderms
  - 5 Silky fabric
  - 6 Alpine goats
  - 7 Height stat
  - 8 Utah City near Provo
  - 9 Belgian artist James
  - 10 Big name in breath mints
  - 11 Tax doc. pro
  - 12 U.S. aliens' subj.
  - 13 Hot brew
  - 14 Storied duelist with a big nose
  - 15 Gators' kin
  - 16 Supply with a new weapon
  - 17 Have a hunch
  - 18 Remington of 1980s TV
  - 19 Went by
  - 24 Yolk's place
  - 29 Med. x-ray
  - 30 Party abbr.
  - 31 Seep
  - 32 Huge heads
  - 33 Get as profit
  - 35 Classical column style
  - 36 "The ball — your court"
  - 37 Hi-tech 'zine
  - 40 "Hush!"
  - 44 Tijuana "that"
  - 46 Prescription measure
  - 47 Lyric Muse
  - 50 Derision
  - 51 Floral oil
  - 53 Rival of Lyft
  - 54 — kwon do
  - 55 One-named Italian model
  - 56 "Hey, I was thinking ..."
  - 57 Glossy proof
  - 61 Deli breads
  - 62 "Well, Did You —?" (Cole Porter tune)
  - 63 Nisan feast
  - 64 Win points
  - 66 SeaWorld killer whale
  - 67 Outfits
  - 68 Peculiarity
  - 71 Roman fountain
  - 72 Shallot's kin
  - 73 — code
  - 74 Many moons
  - 77 Mother bird
  - 80 Singer Morissette
  - 81 Bow rub-on
  - 83 Guitarist Paul
  - 84 Freezing up
  - 86 City
  - 87 "— trap!"
  - 88 Beat big-time
  - 89 Balm plant
  - 90 Mama's ma
  - 91 Old overlord
  - 96 Christie of mystery
  - 97 Import taxes
  - 98 City in Texas
  - 100 Annoys a lot
  - 101 Way to leave
  - 103 Arrive, as fog
  - 106 Christopher of "Superman"
  - 107 Ventures
  - 108 Bunch of, informally
  - 109 Diminish
  - 111 Annoy
  - 114 Mixer choice
  - 118 Aztec cousin
  - 119 "I'm cold!"
  - 120 View
  - 121 It may dispense
  - 13-Down
  - 122 Old ring king
  - 123 Abbr. on a camcorder
  - 124 HST follower





# Advocating for seniors on TV in nine communities

By ED KARVOSKI JR.  
CULTURE EDITOR

GREATER BOSTON – Following a two-decade law career, Roberta Robinson’s personal experience as her mother’s caregiver has compelled her to pursue working with the senior population in various capacities for about 30 years. She currently hosts two television programs designed for an audience of seniors. Each 30-minute show airs on public-access stations in Arlington, Boston, Cambridge, Chelsea, Everett, Malden, Revere, Somerville and Watertown. Episodes also air on YouTube and stream on some stations’ websites.

Since 2006, Robinson has served as director of marketing and outreach at Cambridge Health Alliance (CHA) for its geriatric division and Elder Service Plan, which is part of the national Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) assisting people age 55



Roberta Robinson (left) interviews urologist Dr. Heidi Rayala about prostate cancer on “Health is Wealth.”

and over. According to the Mass.gov website, “PACE is administered by MassHealth and Medicare to provide a wide range of medical, social, recreational and wellness services to eligible participants. The goal of PACE is to allow participants to live safely in their homes instead of in nursing homes.”

Robinson understands firsthand the value of programs such

as PACE to help seniors and their adult children.

“Caring for my mother was definitely the impetus for my coming into elder services,” she said. “I was my mother’s PACE program. Her transitioning process was very slow and subtle. I could have used a whole team to help me. Sometimes, I don’t know if PACE is more beneficial to the participants or to their caregivers.”

In 2012, Robinson united CHA’s efforts with Cambridge Community Television to begin producing “Health is Wealth.” To reach a larger audience, she successfully approached eight other cable-TV stations that are now airing the show. Each month she interviews medical experts on health-related topics of interest to seniors. Past topics have included chronic pain, diabetes, falls and frailty, hearing loss, pacemakers, prostate cancer, thyroids and vertigo.

Robinson herself frequently learns from information offered by the show’s guests including podiatrist Dr. Michael Theodoulou. He discussed with her common myths about shoes – and debunked them.

“He said if shoes don’t feel comfortable from the beginning, then they’re not for you,” she relayed. “We’ve come to believe that shoes need to be stretched out to make them more comfortable, but he said that’s not so.”

Immediately upon Robinson’s chance meeting in 2014 with Erica Jones, membership

and outreach director at Somerville Community Access Television (SCATV), it was discovered that they shared the same idea to create a TV show to showcase notable seniors. CHA partnered with SCATV and their idea became “Legacies: a Journey through the Interesting Lives of Elders.” The program airs on the same nine cable-TV stations as “Health is Wealth.”

Somerville Police Officer Maryanne Manfra suggested “Legacies” first guest, Joe Trofimow.

“Joe was born in Yugoslavia during the German invasion,” Robinson explained. “He talked about how he was in a school for shelter. His mother brought him through four camps to get out to the United States.”

Another memorable guest for Richardson is Elynor Gittens of Somerville.

“Elynor is a cutie pie,” she declared. “She was a dancer and is still an activist. At 88, she had a sign on her walker that said, ‘Black Lives Matter.’”

Robinson also offers health presentations at Boston-area events for older adults. For information about scheduling a presentation, email her at rrobinson@challiance.org.

“My mother passed at 89,” Robinson noted. “Her father was three months shy of 100 when he passed, and my great grandmother was sent a dozen red roses for her 100th from President John F. Kennedy. I could be here for a long time – so I better do this thing called life right.”

## Reverse Mortgages - Ask the Expert

Reverse mortgage  
Continued from page 19

pared to what? They are more expensive than a conventional loan but much less expensive than moving. Each situation is unique so please contact us for a comparative analysis.

**7: “Will I lose my home?”** With a reverse mortgage you retain full control and ownership of your home. You may sell your home at any time with no prepayment penalty and any profit is yours.

**8: “How may I receive reverse mortgage proceeds?”** Options include cash when the loan closes, a monthly distribution, access to a line of credit that is guaranteed to grow over time, or a combination of the three. Please call

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**9: “Will I qualify if I currently have a mortgage?”** There is no requirement for your home to be free and clear.

**10: “Where do I get unbiased information?”** Obtain your free “How to Use Your Home to Stay at Home” 36-page book. This is the official reverse mortgage consumer booklet approved by the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development and published by the National Council on Aging. This is a great place to get basic information.

Please give me a call or email with your questions and to receive your free copy of “Use Your Home to Stay at Home.”

Alain Valles is Managing Director of Helping Hands Community Partners, Inc. and was the first designated Certified Reverse Mortgage Professional in New England. He obtained a Master of Science from the M.I.T. Center for Real Estate, an MBA from the Wharton School, and graduated summa cum laude from UMass Amherst. Alain can be reached directly at 781-724-6221 or by email at av@hhcp.org. Archives of articles from previous issues can be read at [www.fiftyplusadvocate.com](http://www.fiftyplusadvocate.com).

## Answers to Super Crossword

(puzzle on page 19)

I	M	P	E	R	I	A	L	E	T	C	E	T	C	C	R	I	S	P
M	A	I	L	A	B	L	E	N	I	P	S	E	Y	R	E	N	T	A
P	O	P	E	Y	E	T	H	E	S	C	A	L	A	R	O	A	T	E
P	O	X	I	G	O	T	A	C	C	R	U	E	S					
B	O	E	H	N	E	R	G	R	A	D	I	E	N	T	S	M	I	L
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S	O	B	I	S	A	A	C	A	N	O	T	H	E	R				
E	S	S	E	S	T	A	T	E	G	O	B	R	A	S	P			
V	E	C	T	O	R	H	U	G	O	M	E	D	I	A	N	R	A	R
A	D	O	R	N	A	P	E	H	O	T	D	O	G	Y	O	S		
H	E	R	E	I	A	M	R	E	R	U	N	E	L	I				
R	E	V	O	L	U	T	I	O	N	S	P	E	R	S	E	C	A	N
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H	E	A	V	E	A	T	R	E	S	T	D	R	I	V	E	L	E	D
A	S	S	E	S	T	E	R	E	S	A	A	N	N	E	R	I	C	E



# It is better to give than receive

By MARIANNE DELOREY, Ph.D.

*"If you can't feed 100 people, then feed just one." Mother Teresa*



## Housing Options

This is the story of Benny. Benny is one of the many low income elders I have encountered in my travels. He is an immigrant and came to this country to work many years ago. He was illiterate and was only able to do menial work most of his life. Benny had significant troubles, some of which were his own creation. He loved playing the ponies and many months he did not have enough money left over for his rent. He always paid double the next month and would be back on

the straight and narrow for a few months, but seemed to repeat this pattern two to three times a year.

On the months when he had no money, I don't really know how he fed himself. I do know that he tried, when he had food, to feed anyone around him. Very often, that included me. At first, I tried politely refusing his offerings. I did not want to take food from someone who needed all the help he could get.

"Vegetarian," I would explain to him.

"Oh, Te hago arroz y habi-tuelas." "I will make you rice and beans."

Try as I might, I couldn't refuse forever. I ate my share of rice, beans, plantains, and other favorites many times when I worked with Benny. Not only did I get used to these oddly flavored foods, I grew to look forward to it. And something else happened. I started to realize that in providing food for me, Benny was giving back.

Benny did not have much, but he could cook and he could share a meal with me. This breaking of bread meant that he was part of a community. And I was, too.

When you work with the poor or the infirm, sometimes you have to hold yourself apart – we all want to identify and relate to our customers, but there is a healthy professional distance we have to keep for our own sanity. Too much empathy can really burn people out, but also internalizing other people's struggles can weaken ourselves.

But Benny reminded me that we are not so different. In breaking bread with Benny, I learned that we both gave what we could to each other. Our gifts were different, but they were both valuable.

A friend of mine who is a stroke survivor recently noted, "I believe the most important lesson I've learned is that asking for help and accepting help is a 'mitzvah',

a godly deed. Be proud to receive help when needed and know when to ask!" Accepting gifts may be hard, but doing so brings great joy to the giver, and so sometimes letting other people do for us is the greatest gift we can offer.

Perhaps it nudges our world forward a bit also when we accept help. I've always been amazed by the kindness and generosity of my son and I've told him how much I admire this. One time, he told me he wished he was average. Surprised, I asked why. He explained, "Because if I was average, then it means the whole world just got a lot nicer."

Perhaps we need to accept help more often, not necessarily because we need it, but because it encourages more giving and therefore creates and reinforces community. Maybe, Mother Teresa is right. Maybe if we all just feed one person, the whole world is fed.

Marianne Delorey, Ph.D. is the Executive Director of Colony Retirement Homes. She can be reached at 508-755-0444 or [mdelorey@colonyretirement.com](mailto:mdelorey@colonyretirement.com) and [www.colonyretirementhomes.com](http://www.colonyretirementhomes.com). Archives of articles from previous issues can be read at [www.fiftyplusadvocate.com](http://www.fiftyplusadvocate.com).

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# Actress makes encore appearances in Stoneham and Beverly

By ED KARVOSKI JR.  
CULTURE EDITOR

STONEHAM/BEVERLY — Kathy St. George has performed on Broadway, Off-Broadway, a number of national tours, as well as at Boston-area and out-of-state regional theaters — frequently for encore appearances. This past spring, she returned to her hometown in the musical comedy “Calendar Girls” at Greater Boston Stage Company (formerly known as Stoneham Theatre). She’s returning to North Shore Music Theatre in Beverly from July 10 to 22 in one of her favorite musicals, “Peter Pan.”

“An actor’s job is to find a job,” she noted. “We’re always out there looking for work.”

Her Broadway-bound journey began while working as a second-grade teacher in Stoneham, concurrently performing with Reading’s community theater group Quannapowitt Players. Winning a Best Supporting



PHOTO SUBMITTED

**Kathy St. George**

Actress Award at the 1978 New England Theatre Conference encouraged her to pursue acting work in New York City for two years and become an Equity union actress before returning to teaching in Stoneham. Twelve days later, the production stage manager of the 1981 “Fiddler on the Roof” Broadway revival called, offering her the role of Teyve’s youngest daughter Bielke.

“It was a very difficult decision to leave teaching, but I couldn’t say no,” she relayed. “The

“To have played Peter in 1994 and come back as grown-up Wendy and Mrs. Darling is a full-circle moment.”

*Kathy St. George*

next morning, I was at rehearsal with [acclaimed actor] Hershel Bernardi. He swooped me up in his arms and said, ‘My daughter Bielke is here!’”

St. George subsequently toured nationally twice with Bernardi in “Fiddler.” On Broadway again in 1990, she played Teyve’s daughter Shprintze and Grandma Tzeitel in the Tony Award-winning Best Revival production of “Fiddler” with [actor] Topol, followed by two more national tours.

“It took a few months being on tour for me to really realize how much life can change with one phone call,” she recalled.

After returning to Stoneham in 1991, she continued working steadily on tours and at regional theaters. In 1994, she played the title role of “Peter Pan” at Riverside Theatre in Vero Beach, Fla. She cites the role as her most memorable.

“I love the infectious excitement that Peter brings to every moment,” she said. “It was the single most magnificent theatrical experience of my life.”

St. George has appeared on many stages as the Soap Star in “Menopause the Musical” including Boston’s Stuart Street Theatre in 2004, Stoneham’s Greater Boston Stage Company in 2014 and 2017, several national tours, and at The Vets in Providence this past May. Duplicating a daytime drama diva onstage, St. George draws upon her experience working as Su-

san Lucci’s stand-in for “All My Children” while in NYC.

“The playwright said she modeled the soap star after Susan Lucci, so I do a bit of that haughty attitude that Susan would put into ‘Erica Kane,’” St. George shared. “The character’s songs are about aging and wrinkles — things that every woman can identify with, but shouldn’t dwell on. It’s a privilege to get to older — let’s embrace and celebrate it.”

Among Boston theaters where St. George has worked in multiple shows are Lyric Stage Company, earning the 2007 Best Solo Performance Award from the Independent Reviewers of New England for “And Now Ladies and Gentlemen, Miss Judy Garland”; and SpeakEasy Stage Company, capturing recognition for Outstanding Performance by an Actress at the 2012 Elliot Norton Awards for “The Divine Sister.”

Now living in Lakeville, St. George calls Stoneham her “theatrical home.” There, she was born and raised, taught second-graders for five years and continues working gigs regularly.

“Lots of my former students come see me in shows and still call me Miss St. George,” she said. “When I taught them they were 7-year-olds; now they’re in their 40s with children of their own. It’s a joy that they have such happy memories of being in my second-grade classroom.”

St. George played Roz in “9 to 5: the Musical” at North Shore Music Theatre in 2012. Returning to this theater in “Peter Pan,” she’s portraying the maternal Mrs. Darling and the adult Wendy.

“To have played Peter in 1994 and come back as grown-up Wendy and Mrs. Darling is a full-circle moment,” she said. “I’m looking forward to being part of this story with classic songs again, telling this beautiful tale that appeals to children and grown-ups. It’s a magical story.”

For more information about Kathy St. George, visit [kathystgeorge.com](http://kathystgeorge.com).

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# The snake and I

BY JANICE LINDSAY

**W**e've often had garter snakes in our garage, but we never had one as bold as Samantha.



## Inklings

Our garage possesses a snake-friendly corner, just inside the electric door. A snake can slither in through a tiny gap in the door molding. The builders of the house created a concrete block along the base of the garage wall, about two inches tall and two inches deep. They covered that, except for the ends, with a wooden block about twice those dimensions. This creates a perfect, cool, dark tunnel for snake repose and concealment.

Most snakes prefer concealment. The only sign of their presence: shed skin.

Samantha preferred the "repose" feature. In the cool of a summer morning, I might find her 20 inches coiled into a four-inch rectangle on the corner of the concrete block. She would regard me with a defiant, steady gaze. She seemed to say, "So you have a snake in your garage. I'm not moving. Get over it."

Historically, the relationship between snake and woman has been shaky. The snake in the Garden of Eden tempted Eve to eat the forbidden fruit. Eve succumbed, then tempted Adam who also succumbed. Thus began a time-honored tradition: when you make a mistake, blame somebody else. Adam blamed Eve, Eve blamed the snake, and God decreed eternal enmity between woman and snake.

So it's instinct for me to get skin-crawly at the thought of snakes in the garage, especially not knowing how many might be in there. Snakes are unsettling, the way they slither and twist in totally unpredictable patterns. Other wild denizens have legs. It's easier to relate to creatures with legs. At least you can tell

which way they're heading.

Still, I didn't interfere much with Samantha. I respected her pluck.

My first personal encounter with her had occurred one day when I needed to drive out of the garage, and she was stretched out behind the car. I tried to persuade her to move by prodding her gently with my broom handle. She was having none of that. Finally, I resorted to sweeping her aside with the brush part. To my dismay, I must have poked her with one of the bristles, because I drew a little blood. I felt terrible. I don't like to draw blood from any creature, even a snake.

She apparently took my guilt as a sign that I would now treat her with greater respect, for she returned to the garage. I knew it was Samantha because I saw her in her favorite pose. On a warm summer day, she often rested with her head in the sun outside the garage, poked through the gap in the molding, while the rest of her remained curled up in the cool inside.

One late afternoon, as I drove into the driveway, Samantha was stretched out parallel to the garage door, a few inches in front of it. Her head lay exactly in the path of my driver-side wheels.

Here was an unexpected opportunity to diminish the garage-snake population, and to write a historic wrong. Respect for Samantha's pluck aside, she was still a snake. And hadn't her ancestor been instrumental in the fall of mine?

But I couldn't do it. By then, we had developed almost a relationship. I stopped the car, got out, and explained to Samantha that she really must move. Slowly, with apparent reluctance – and perhaps some distain – she curled her way into the grass beside the driveway.

I called after her, "Samantha, I would not be unhappy if you decided to live somewhere else."

Samantha was probably thinking the same about me.

Contact [jlindsay@tidewater.net](mailto:jlindsay@tidewater.net)

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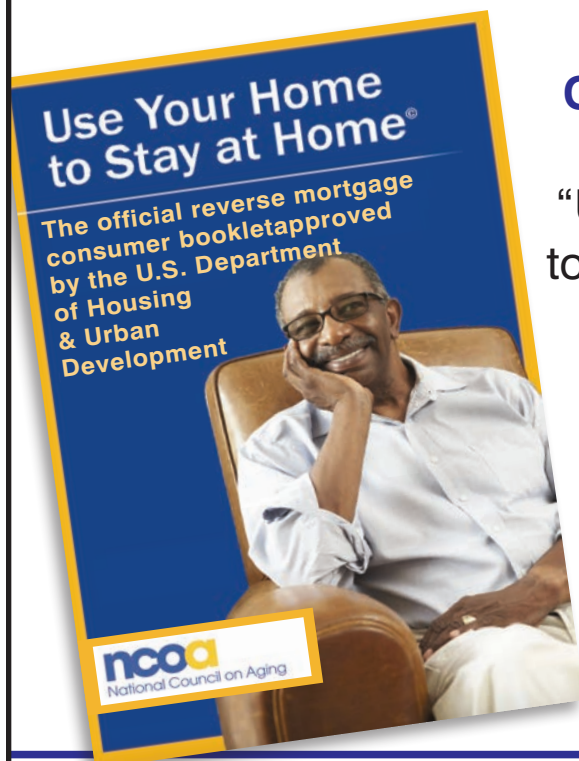
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## The Answer to Clear and Easy Phone Conversations

If you have difficulty using a standard telephone, MassRelay has the solution you've been looking for. Whether you are deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind or have difficulty speaking, there is a free and confidential relay service that will fit your need.

**Captioned Telephone (CapTel®)** lets you speak to friends and family over the phone and listen to their responses, while reading word-for-word captions on an easy-to-read screen.

**Text Telephone (TTY)** lets you type your side of the conversation and read the other person's responses.

**Speech-to-Speech (STS)** features a specially-trained Operator who will revoice your words as needed for improved clarity while you speak and listen through the phone.

**Hearing Carry Over (HCO)** lets you listen to your phone conversation and type your responses for an Operator to voice to the other person.

**Voice Carry Over (VCO)** lets you speak to friends and family and read their responses on the phone's screen.

**Deaf-Blind Service (DBS)** allows you to type your messages and read the other person's responses on a braille display.

**Spanish Relay** features a Spanish-speaking Operator trained to relay any call type.

*CapTel® is a registered trademark of Ultratec, Inc.*



# MassRelay

Let's talk.

**To learn more about MassRelay,  
visit [Mass.gov/MassRelay](http://Mass.gov/MassRelay) or call us:  
800.720.3480 (TTY) | 800.720.3479 (Voice)**